

Primary Sources related to Agrarianism

1.

Excerpts from *The History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina* (1728)

by William Byrd II

an account of the surveying of the border between the U.S. states of North Carolina and Virginia in 1728.

William Byrd II (1674 – 1744) was a planter, slave-owner and author from Charles City County, Virginia. He is considered the founder of Richmond, Virginia.

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March 25, 1728

Surely there is no place in the world where the inhabitants live with less Labour than in N Carolina. It approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the People.

Indian Corn is of so great increase, that a little Pains will Subsist a very large Family with Bread, and then they may have meat without any pains at all, by the Help of the Low Grounds, and the great Variety of Mast that grows on the High-land. The Men, for their Parts, just like the Indians, impose all the Work upon the poor Women. They make their Wives rise out of their Beds early in the Morning, at the same time that they lye and Snore, till the Sun has run one third of his course, and disperst all the unwholesome Damps. Then, after Stretching and Yawning for half an Hour, they light their Pipes, and, under the Protection of a cloud of Smoak, venture out into the open Air; tho', if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return Shivering into the Chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon the corn-field fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a Small Heat at the Hough: but generally find reasons to put it off till another time.

Thus they loiter away their Lives, like Solomon's Sluggard, with their Arms across, and at the Winding up of the Year Scarcely have Bread to Eat.

To speak the Truth, tis a thorough Aversion to Labor that makes People file off to N Carolina, where Plenty and a Warm Sun confirm them in their Disposition to Laziness for their whole Lives.

November 16, 1728

We landed at the Plantation of Cornelius Keith, where I beheld the wretchedest Scene of Poverty I had ever met with in this happy Part of the World. The Man, his Wife and Six Small Children, liv'd in a Penn, like so many Cattle, without any Roof over their Heads but that of Heaven. And this was their airy Residence in the Day time, but then there was a

Fodder Stack not far from this Inclosure, in which the whole Family shelter'd themselves a night's and in bad weather.

However, 'twas almost worth while to be as poor as this Man was, to be as perfectly contented. All his Wants proceeded from Indolence, and not from Misfortune. He had good Land, as well as good Health and good Limbs to work it, and, besides, had a Trade very useful to all the Inhabitants round about. He cou'd make and set up Quern Stones^^ very well, and had proper Materials for that purpose just at Hand, if he cou'd have taken the pains to fetch them.

There is no other kind of Mills in those remote parts, and, therefore, if the Man wou'd have Workt at his Trade, he might have liv'd very comfortably. The poor woman had a little more Industry, and Spun Cotton enough to make a thin covering for her own and her children's Nakedness.

Entire text

https://ia600605.us.archive.org/14/items/williambyrdshist00byrd/williambyrdshist00byrd_djvu.txt

2.

Excerpt from *Notes on the State of Virginia*. 1787.

Thomas Jefferson

In his only published book, Jefferson recorded information about the natural history, inhabitants, and political organization of Virginia responding to questions about Virginia, posed to him in 1780 by François Barbé-Marbois, then Secretary of the French delegation in Philadelphia

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"Manufactures"

The present state of manufactures, commerce, interior and exterior trade?

Manufactures We never had an interior trade of any importance. Our exterior commerce has suffered very much from the beginning of the present contest. During this time we have manufactured within our families the most necessary articles of cloathing. Those of cotton will bear some comparison with the same kinds of manufacture in Europe; but those of wool, flax and hemp are very coarse, unsightly, and unpleasant: and such is our attachment to agriculture, and such our preference for foreign manufactures, that be it wise or unwise, our people will certainly return as soon as they can, to the raising raw materials, and exchanging them for finer manufactures than they are able to execute themselves.

The political economists of Europe have established it as a principle that every state should endeavour to manufacture for itself: and this principle, like many others, we transfer to America, without calculating the difference of circumstance which should often produce a difference of result. In Europe the lands are either cultivated, or locked up against the cultivator. Manufacture must therefore be resorted to of necessity not of choice, to support the surplus of their people. But we have an immensity of land courting the industry of the husbandman. Is it best then that all our citizens should be employed in its improvement, or that one half should be called off from that to exercise manufactures and handicraft arts for the other? Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose

breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phaenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on the casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition. This, the natural progress and consequence of the arts, has sometimes perhaps been retarded by accidental circumstances: but, generally speaking, the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any state to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good-enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption. While we have land to labour then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths, are wanting in husbandry: but, for the general operations of manufacture, let our work-shops remain in Europe. It is better to carry provisions and materials to workmen there, than bring them to the provisions and materials, and with them their manners and principles. The loss by the transportation of commodities across the Atlantic will be made up in happiness and permanence of government. The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution.

From <http://www.humanitiesweb.org/human.php?s=h&p=c&a=p&ID=23240&c=481>

3.

Excerpts from *Letters from an American Farmer*

Originally published 1782

By J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur

De Crèvecoeur immigrated to New France in North America in 1755. There, he served in the French and Indian War as a surveyor in the French Colonial Militia, rising to the rank of lieutenant. Following the British defeat of the French Army in 1759, he moved to New York State, then the Province of New York, where he took out citizenship, adopted the English-American name of John Hector St. John, and in 1770 married an American woman, Mehitable Tippet. He bought a sizable farm in Orange County, New York, where he prospered as a farmer. He started writing about life in the American colonies and the emergence of an American society.

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I WISH I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled; he must necessarily feel a share of national pride, when he views the chain of settlements which embellishes these extended shores. When he says to himself, this is the work of my countrymen, who, when convulsed by factions, afflicted by a variety of miseries and wants, restless and impatient, took refuge here. They brought along with them their national genius, to which they principally owe what liberty they enjoy, and what substance they possess. Here he sees the industry of his native country displayed in a new manner, and traces in their works the embryos of all the arts, sciences, and ingenuity which flourish in Europe. Here he beholds fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges, where an hundred years ago all was wild, woody and uncultivated! What a train of pleasing ideas this fair spectacle must suggest; it is a prospect which must inspire a good citizen with the most heartfelt pleasure. The difficulty consists in the manner of viewing so extensive a scene. He is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess every thing and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no

bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe. Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself. If he travels through our rural districts he views not the hostile castle, and the haughty mansion, contrasted with the clay-built hut and miserable cabin, where cattle and men help to keep each other warm, and dwell in meanness, smoke, and indigence. A pleasing uniformity of decent competence appears throughout our habitations. The meanest of our log-houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country. It must take some time ere he can reconcile himself to our dictionary, which is but short in words of dignity, and names of honour. (There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble waggons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labour of others. We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve, and bleed: we are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free; as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing equality so transitory as many others are.. . . .

Here you will find but few crimes; these have acquired as yet no root among us. I wish I were able to trace all my ideas; if my ignorance prevents me from describing them properly, I hope I shall be able to delineate a few of the outlines, which are all I propose.

Those who live near the sea, feed more on fish than on flesh, and often encounter that boisterous element. This renders them more bold and enterprising; this leads them to neglect the confined occupations of the land. They see and converse with a variety of people; their intercourse with mankind becomes extensive. The sea inspires them with a love of traffic, a desire of transporting produce from one place to another; and leads them to a variety of resources which supply the place of labour. Those who inhabit the middle settlements, by far the most numerous, must be very different; the simple cultivation of the earth purifies them, but the indulgences of the government, the soft remonstrances of religion, the rank of independent freeholders, must necessarily inspire them with sentiments, very little known in Europe among people of the same class. What do I say? Europe has no such class of men; the early knowledge they acquire, the early bargains they make, give them a great degree of sagacity.

Entire Text: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/CREV/letter03.html>
Lesson Plan based on this source: <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american/procedure.html>

4.

Excerpt from *The Internal State of America, 1799*
by Benjamin Franklin

The great Business of the Continent is Agriculture. For one Artisan, or Merchant, I suppose, we have at least 100 Farmers, by far the greatest part Cultivators of their own fertile Lands, from whence many of them draw, not only the Food necessary for their Subsistance, but the Materials of their Clothing, so as to have little Occasion for foreign Supplies ; while they have a Surplus of Productions to dispose of, whereby Wealth is gradually accumulated. Such has been

the Goodness of Divine Providence to these Regions, and so favourable the Climate, that, since the three or four Years of Hardship hi the first Settlement of our Fathers here, a Famine or Scarcity has never been heard of among us; on the contrary, tho' some Years may have been more, and others less plentiful, there has always been Provision enough for ourselves, and a Quantity to spare for Exportation. And altho' the Crops of last year were generally good, never was the Farmer better paid for the Part he can spare Commerce, as the published Price-Currents abundantly testify. The Lands he possesses are also continually rising in Value with the Increase of Population ; and, on the whole, he is enabled to give such good Wages to those who work for him, that all who are acquainted with the old World must agree, that in no Part of it are the labouring Poor so well fed, well cloth'd, well lodg'd, and well paid, as in the United States of America.

Entire text - http://www.archive.org/stream/writingsofbenjam10franuoft/writingsofbenjam10franuoft_djvu.txt

5.

Excerpt from *What I know of farming: a series of brief and plain expositions of practical agriculture as an art based upon science.*

1871

By Horace Greeley

Horace Greeley (1811 –, 1872) was an American newspaper editor, a founder of the Liberal Republican Party, a reformer, a politician, and an outspoken opponent of slavery. The New York Tribune (which he founded and edited) was the most influential U.S. newspaper from the 1840s to the 1870s

He supported agrarian political policies and felt that he knew enough about agriculture to write a book. Greeley was born in Amherst, New Hampshire, the son of poor farmers, but left the farm in his teens.

He says that he does not fall for the romantic concept of the farmer as “more virtuous, upright, unselfish, or deserving, than other people.” His admiration for farming, he says, is a very practical matter.

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I. I regard farming as that vocation which conduces most directly and palpably to a reverence for Honesty and Truth. The young lawyer is often constrained, or at least tempted, by his necessities, to do the dirty professional work of a rascal intent on cheating his neighbor out of his righteous dues. The young doctor may be likewise incited to resort to a quackery he despises in order to secure instant bread ; the unknown author is often impelled to write what will sell rather than what the public ought

to buy ; but the young farmer, acting as a farmer, must realize that his success depends upon his absolute verity and integrity. He deals directly with Nature, which never was and never will be cheated. He has no temptation to sow beach sand for plaster, dock-seed for clover, or stoop to any trick or juggle whatever. When he, having grown his crop, shall attempt to sell it in other words, when he ceases to be a farmer and becomes a trader he may possibly be tempted into one of the many devious ways of rascality ; but, so long as he is acting simply as a farmer, he can hardly be lured from the broad, straight highway of integrity and righteousness.

III. **The farmer's calling** seems to me that most conducive to thorough manliness of character. Nobody expects him to cringe, or smirk, or curry favor, in order to sell his produce. No merchant refuses to buy it because his politics are detested or his religious opinions heterodox. He may be a Mormon, a Rebel, a Millerite, or a Communist, yet his Grain or his Pork will sell for exactly what it is worth not a fraction less or more than the price commanded by the kindred product of like quality and intrinsic value of his neighbor, whose opinions on all points are faultlessly orthodox and popular.

The true farmer is proudly aware that it is quite otherwise with his pursuit that no one expects him to swallow any creed, support any party, or defer to any prejudice, as a condition precedent to the sale of his products. Hence, I feel that it is easier and more natural in his pursuit than in any other for a man to work for a living, and aspire to success and consideration, without sacrificing self-respect, compromising integrity, or ceasing to be essentially and thoroughly a gentleman.

Entire text of the book - <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007680112>

Harpers Weekly cartoon related to Greeley's book -

<http://www.harpsweek.com/09Cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=January&Date=20>

6.

Excerpt from "Transcendental Wild Oats" by Louisa May Alcott in A Chapter from an Unwritten Romance (1883)

An essay about the author's childhood experience at her father's utopian experience – Fruitlands. Fruitlands only lasted from June 1842 – January 1844.

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The goods and chattels of the Society not having arrived, the weary family reposed before the fire on blocks of wood, while Brother Moses White regaled them with roasted potatoes, brown bread and water, in two plates, a tin pan, and one mug; his table service being limited. But, having cast the forms and vanities of a depraved world behind them, the elders welcomed hardship with the enthusiasm of new pioneers, and the children heartily enjoyed this foretaste of what they believed was to be a sort of perpetual picnic.

During the progress of this frugal meal, two more brothers appeared. One a dark, melancholy man, clad in homespun, whose peculiar mission was to turn his name hind part before and use as few words as possible. The other was a bland, bearded Englishman, who expected to be saved by eating uncooked food and going without clothes. He had not yet adopted the primitive costume, however; but contented himself with meditatively chewing dry beans out of a basket.

"Neither sugar, molasses, milk, butter, cheese, nor flesh are to be used among us, for nothing is to be admitted which has caused wrong or death to man or beast."

"Our garments are to be linen till we learn to raise our own cotton or some substitute for woollen fabrics," added Brother Abel, blissfully basking in an imaginary future as warm and brilliant as the generous fire before him.

Any housewife can imagine the emotions of Sister Hope (Louisa May Alcott's mother), when she took possession of a large, dilapidated kitchen, containing an old stove and the peculiar stores out of which food was to be evolved for her little family of eleven. Cakes of maple sugar, dried peas and beans, barley and hominy, meal of all sorts, potatoes, and dried fruit. No milk, butter, cheese, tea, or meat appeared. Even salt was considered a useless luxury and spice entirely forbidden by these lovers of Spartan simplicity. A ten years' experience of vegetarian vagaries had been good training for this new freak, and her sense of the ludicrous supported her through many trying scenes.

Unleavened bread, porridge, and water for breakfast; bread, vegetables, and water for dinner; bread, fruit, and water for supper was the bill of fare ordained by the elders. No teapot profaned that sacred stove, no gory steak cried aloud for vengeance from her chaste gridiron; and only a brave woman's taste, time, and temper were sacrificed on that domestic altar.. . . .

Such farming probably was never seen before since Adam delved. The band of brothers began by spading garden and field; but a few days of it lessened their ardor amazingly. Blistered hands and aching backs suggested the expediency of permitting the use of cattle till the workers were better fitted for noble toil by a summer of the new life.

Brother Moses brought a yoke of oxen from his farm,--at least, the philosophers thought so till it was discovered that one of the animals was a cow

Full text - http://womenshistory.about.com/od/alcottlouisamay/a/lma_transcend.htm and http://womenshistory.about.com/od/alcottlouisamay/a/lma_transcend_b.htm

Additional background information - <http://www.womenwriters.net/domesticgoddess/thesis2.htm>

7.

Excerpt from *Triumphant Democracy* (1886)

Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie (1835 - 1919) was American industrialist who led the enormous expansion of the American steel industry in the late 19th century.

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CHAPTER XIV AGRICULTURE

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more ISAIAH (Old Testament, Bible)

WE talk of our commerce and we boast of our manufactures but the products of the soil are more important than both combined.

While commerce employs 2,900,000, and manufactures and mining 6,000,000, by far the largest corps of the industrial army - 10,700,000 - tills the soil. Fortunate indeed for the country that so great a proportion of its people are farmers and live in the country close to nature, among birds and bees and flowers and the golden grain and the scent of the hay, and with the complaining brooks that make the meadows green; where the morning sun can be seen as it comes forth, and the glorious picture of its setting can be worshipped every evening. This is the life that produces contented, sober minded, good natured, fair and independent men. The rural democracy is the controlling force which shields the nation from the "falsehood of extremes."

To say that the soil is owned and cultivated by the people is to dispel all doubts as to the stability, the peace, and the prosperity of the State .

8.

National People's Party Platform - 1892

Although historians often speak of a "Populist movement" in the 1880s, it wasn't until 1892 that the People's or Populist Party was formally organized. The Omaha Platform, adopted by the founding convention of the party on July 4, 1892, set out the basic tenets of the Populist movement. The movement had emerged out of the cooperative crusade organized by the Farmer's Alliance in the 1880s. The preamble was written by Minnesota lawyer, farmer, politician, and novelist Ignatius Donnelly. Delegates to the convention embraced the platform with great enthusiasm. Many of the specific proposals urged by the Omaha Platform—the graduated income tax, the secret ballot, the direct election of Senators, the eight-hour day—won enactment in the progressive and New Deal eras of the next century.

Information above and entire primary source at: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5361>

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PREAMBLE

The conditions which surround us best justify our co-operation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes—tramps and millionaires.

PLATFORM

We declare, therefore—

First.—That the union of the labor forces of the United States this day consummated shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit enter into all hearts for the salvation of the Republic and the uplifting of mankind.

Second.—Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. "If any will not work, neither shall he eat." The interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical.

Third.—We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the Constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil-service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees.

3. We demand a graduated income tax.

TRANSPORTATION—Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people. The telegraph, telephone, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

LAND.—The land, including all the natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

EXPRESSION OF SENTIMENTS

Your Committee on Platform and Resolutions beg leave unanimously to report the following:

Whereas, Other questions have been presented for our consideration, we hereby submit the following, not as a part of the Platform of the People's Party, but as resolutions expressive of the sentiment of this Convention.

1. RESOLVED, That we demand a free ballot and a fair count in all elections and pledge ourselves to secure it to every legal voter without Federal Intervention, through the adoption by the States of the unperverted Australian or secret ballot system.
4. RESOLVED, That we condemn the fallacy of protecting American labor under the present system, which opens our ports to the pauper and criminal classes of the world and crowds out our wage-earners; and we denounce the present ineffective laws against contract labor, and demand the further restriction of undesirable emigration.
5. RESOLVED, That we cordially sympathize with the efforts of organized workingmen to shorten the hours of labor, and demand a rigid enforcement of the existing eight-hour law on Government work, and ask that a penalty clause be added to the said law.
6. RESOLVED, That we regard the maintenance of a large standing army of mercenaries, known as the Pinkerton system, as a menace to our liberties, and we demand its abolition. . . .
7. RESOLVED, That we commend to the favorable consideration of the people and the reform press the legislative system known as the initiative and referendum.
8. RESOLVED, That we favor a constitutional provision limiting the office of President and Vice-President to one term, and providing for the election of Senators of the United States by a direct vote of the people.
9. RESOLVED, That we oppose any subsidy or national aid to any private corporation for any purpose.
10. RESOLVED, That this convention sympathizes with the Knights of Labor and their righteous contest with the tyrannical combine of clothing manufacturers of Rochester, and declare it to be a duty of all who hate tyranny and oppression to refuse to purchase the goods made by the said manufacturers, or to patronize any merchants who sell such goods.

9.

Prose Works. 1892.

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

The Common Earth, the Soil

THE SOIL, too—let others pen-and-ink the sea, the air, (as I sometimes try)—but now I feel to choose the common soil for theme—naught else. The brown soil here, (just between winter-close and opening spring and vegetation)—the rain-shower at night, and the fresh smell next morning—the red worms wriggling out of the ground—the dead leaves, the incipient grass, and the latent life underneath—the effort to start something—already in shelter'd spots some little flowers—the distant emerald show of winter wheat and the rye-fields—the yet naked trees, with clear interstices, giving prospects hidden in summer—the tough fallow and the plow-team, and the stout boy whistling to his horses for encouragement—and there the dark fat earth in long slanting stripes upturn'd.

From - <http://www.bartleby.com/229/1128.html>

10.

Excerpts from "The Husbandman"
An essay first published in 1924
By H. L. Mencken

Mencken was an American journalist, essayist, magazine editor, satirist, critic of American life and culture best known for his satirical reporting on the Scopes trial, which he dubbed the "Monkey Trial". He was a vocal supporter of scientific progress, he was very skeptical of economic theories and particularly critical of anti-intellectualism, bigotry, populism, fundamentalist Christianity, creationism, organized religion, the existence of God, and osteopathic/chiropractic medicine.

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...LET the farmer, so far as I am concerned, be damned forevermore. To Hell with him, and bad luck to him. He is a tedious fraud and ignoramus, a cheap rogue and hypocrite, the eternal Jack of the human pack. He deserves all that he ever suffers under our economic system, and more. Any city man, not insane, who sheds tears for him is shedding tears of the crocodile.

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It was among country Methodists, practitioners of a theology degraded almost to the level of voodooism, that Prohibition was invented, and it was by country Methodists, nine-tenths of them actual followers of the plow, that it was fastened upon the rest of us, to the damage of our bank accounts, our dignity and our ease. What lies under it, and under all the other crazy enactments of its category, is no more and no less than the yokel's congenital and incurable hatred of the city man – his simian rage against everyone who, as he sees it, is having a better time than he is. That this malice is at the bottom of Prohibition, and not any altruistic yearning to put down the evils of drink, it shown clearly by the fact that most of the State enforcement acts – and even the Volstead Act, as it is interpreted at Washington – permit the farmer himself to make cider as in the past,

The farm is thus content . . . to bring his enemy down to his own level. The same animus is visible in innumerable other moral statues, all ardently supported by the peasantry. For example, the Mann Act. The aim of this amazing law, of course, is not to put down adultery; it is simply to put down the variety of adultery which is most agreeable. What got it upon the books was simply the constant gabble in the rural newspapers about rich stockbrokers who frequented Atlantic City from Friday to Monday, vaudeville actors who traveled about the country with beautiful mistresses, and so on. Such aphrodisiacal tales, read beside the kitchen-stove by hicks condemned to monogamous misery with stupid, unclean, and ill-natured wives

Entire essay -

http://books.google.com/books?id=wd5YYZ7NBO4C&pg=PA165&lpg=PA165&dq=%22since+then+a+number+of+the+cow+states+have+passed+Mann+Acts+of+their+own%22&source=bl&ots=4DsHqVKZvS&sig=Ve0cSNLy7xmSpcFx80mc3o94bpY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=srMAU_K6KYqpyAHmz4EI&ved=0CCQQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22since%20then%20a%20number%20of%20the%20cow%20states%20have%20passed%20Mann%20Acts%20of%20their%20own%22&f=false

11.

I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition, 1930
By Twelve Southerners

The Southern Agrarians (also known as the Twelve Southerners, the Vanderbilt Agrarians, the Nashville Agrarians, the Tennessee Agrarians, or the Fugitive Agrarians) were a group of twelve American writers, poets, essayists, and novelists,

all with roots in the Southern United States, who joined together to write a pro-Southern agrarian manifesto, a collection of essays published in 1930 titled I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition.

Robert Penn Warren is probably the best know today.

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I'll Take My Stand

Introduction: A Statement of Principles

THE authors contributing to this book are Southerners, well acquainted with one another and of similar tastes, though not necessarily living in the same physical community, and perhaps only at this moment aware of themselves as a single group of men. All the articles bear in the same sense upon the book's title-subject: all tend to support a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way; and all as much as agree that the best terms in which to represent the distinction are contained in the phrase, *Agrarian versus Industrial*.

Opposed to the industrial society is the agrarian, which does not stand in particular need of definition. An agrarian society is hardly one that has no use at all for industries, for professional vocations, for scholars and artists, and for the life of cities. Technically, perhaps, an agrarian society is one in which agriculture is the leading vocation, whether for wealth, for pleasure, or for prestige—a form of labor that is pursued with intelligence and leisure, and that becomes the model to which the other forms approach as well as they may. But an agrarian regime will be secured readily enough where the superfluous industries are not allowed to rise against it. The theory of agrarianism is that the culture of the soil is the best and most sensitive of vocations, and that therefore it should have the economic preference and enlist the maximum number of workers.

These principles do not intend to be very specific in proposing any practical measures. How may the little agrarian community resist the Chamber of Commerce of its county seat, which is always trying to import some foreign industry that cannot be assimilated to the life-pattern of the community? Just what must the Southern leaders do to defend the traditional Southern life? How may the Southern and the Western agrarians unite for effective action? Should the agrarian forces try to capture the Democratic party, which historically is so closely affiliated with the defense of individualism, the small community, the state, the South? Or must the agrarians—even the Southern ones—abandon the Democratic party to its fate and try a new one? What legislation could most profitably be championed by the powerful agrarians in the Senate of the United States? What anti-industrial measures might promise to stop the advances of industrialism, or even undo some of them, with the least harm to those concerned? What policy should be pursued by the educators who have a tradition at heart? These and many other questions are of the greatest importance, but they cannot be answered here.

For, in conclusion, this much is clear: If a community, or a section, or a race, or an age, is groaning under industrialism, and well aware that it is an evil dispensation, it must find the way to throw it off. To think that this cannot be done is pusillanimous. And if the whole community, section, race, or age thinks it cannot be done, then it has simply lost its political genius and doomed itself to impotence.

Entire text - <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA01/White/anthology/agrarian.html>

12.

Andrew Lytle, one of the 12 Southern writers

Excerpt from essay "The Hind Tit"

Andrew Lytle, an author, critic, teacher and one of the 12 Southern writers who banded together in the 1920's to form the Agrarian movement. Lytle actually lived the agrarian tradition. The only real farmer in the group, he ran a series of family-owned farms and tended a garden that supplied virtually all the produce for his table until he was well into his 80's.

* * * * *

Industrialism gives an electric refrigerator, bottled milk, and dairy butter. It takes a few minutes to remove it from the ice to the table, while the agrarian process has taken several hours and is spread out over two or three days. Industrialism saves time, but what is to be done with this time? The milkmaid can't go to the movies, read the sign-boards, and go play bridge all the time. In the moderate circumstances of this family, deprived of her place in the home economy, she will be exiled to the town to clerk all day. If the income of the family can afford it, she remains idle, and therefore miserable.

But in any case the farmer receives few direct profits. Asphalt companies, motor-car companies, oil and cement companies, engineers, contractors, bus lines, truck lines and politicians-not the farmer-receive the great benefits' and the profits from good roads. But the farmer pays the bills. The states and counties float bonds and attend to the upkeep on the highways and byways, and when these states are predominantly agricultural, it is the people living on the land who mortgage their labor and the security of their property so that these super-corporations may increase incomes which are now so large that they must organize foundations to give them away. But the great drain comes after the roads are built. Auto-mobile salesmen, radio salesmen, and every other kind of salesman descends to take away the farmer's money. The railroad had no such universal sweep into a family's privacy. It was confined to a certain track and was constrained by its organization within boundaries which were rigid enough to become absorbed, rather than absorb. But good roads brought the motorcar and made of every individual an engineer or conductor, requiring a constant, and in some instances a daily, need for cash. The psychological pressure of such things, and mounting taxes, induce the farmer to

forsake old ways and buy a ledger.

The great drain continues. The first thing he does is to trade his mules for a tractor. He has had to add a cash payment to boot, but that seems reasonable. He forgets; however, that a piece of machinery, like his mules, must wear out and be replaced; but the tractor cannot reproduce itself. He must lay aside a large sum of money against the day of replacement, whereas formerly he had only to send his brood mare to some jack for service.

The next thing it does, it throws his boys out of a job, with the possible exception of one who will remain and run it. This begins the home-breaking. Time is money now, not property, and the boys can't hang about the place draining it of its substance, even if they are willing to. They must go out somewhere and get a job. If they are lucky, some filling station will let them sell gas, or some garage teach them a mechanic's job. But the time is coming when these places will have a surfeit of farmer boys.

He next buys a truck. The gals wanted a car, but he was obdurate on that point, so he lost them. They went to town to visit kin, then gradually drifted there to marry or get a job. The time comes when the old woman succumbs to high-pressure sales talk and forces him to buy a car on the installment plan. By that time he is so far gone that one thing more seems no great matter.

He then has three vehicles which must be fed from the oil companies, several notes at the bank bearing interest, and payments, as regular as clock strokes, to be made on the car. He finds his payment for gasoline, motor oil, and power for his tractor is tremendously higher than the few cents coal oil used to cost him. Formerly he bought it by the lampful; he now buys it by the barrelful. In fact, he no longer uses coal oil for lighting. He has installed a, Delco- plant. Besides giving illumination it pumps his water turns the churn, washes the clothes, heats the iron to press them, and cooks the victuals. If his daughters had not already moved away, he would have had to send them, for Delco has taken their place in the rural economy. The farmer's wife now becomes a drudge. As the mainstay of the structure she was content to bear the greatest burden, but now she grows restive. She has changed from a creator in a fixed culture to an assistant to machines. Her condition is miserable because her burdens are almost as great without the compensation of the highest place in the old scheme.

Her services cannot be recompensed with gold, and gold has become the only currency.

Gradually the farmer becomes more careless of his garden. Each year he cuts down on the meat-the curing takes too much time. He may finally kill only a hog or two, and, under the necessity of paying interest, sell all his cows but one

.....

So long as the industrialist remains in the saddle there must be a money crop to pay him taxes, but let it occupy second place. Any man who grows his own food, kills his own meat, takes wool from his lambs and cotton from his stalks and makes them into clothes, plants corn and hay for his stock, shoes them at the crossroads blacksmith shop, draws milk and butter from his cows, eggs from his pullets water from the ground, and fuel from the woodlot, can live in an industrial world without a great deal of cash.

Let him diversify, but diversify so that he may live rather than that he may grow rich. In this way he will escape by far the heaviest form of taxation, and if the direct levies grow too exorbitant, refuse to pay them. Make those who rule the country bear the burdens of government.

Entire Essay can be found here – “The Hind Tit”

<http://scribe.richmond.edu/jessid/eng423/restricted/lytle.pdf>

13.

Excerpt from poem “Prologue - The Long Street”

By Donald Davidson – (1893 –1968)

poet, essayist, social and literary critic, and author and one of the Southern Agrarians

From volume of poems *The Tall Men* (1927)

Pacing the long steet where is not summer
But only burning summer – looking for spring
That is not, spring that will not be here

.....

The grass cannot remember; trees cannot
Remember what once was here. But even so,
They too are here no longer. Where is the grass?
Only the blind stone roots of the dull street
And the steel thews of houses flourish here

And the baked curve of asphalt, smooth, trodden
Covers dead earth that once was quick with grass,
Snuffing the ground with acrid breath the motors
Fret the long street. Steel answers steel. Dust whirls.
Skulls hurry past with the pale flesh yet clinging
And a little hair.

.....
Or in this dead commingled smoke and dark take leave
Of dead men under a pall, nameless and choked

14.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Message to Congress on Farm Tenancy.
February 6, 1937

By the 1930s, farmers were plagued with unemployment, poor housing, ill health, insufficient education and general insecurity. A continuing decrease in the proportion of operating owners and a sharp increase in the proportion of sharecroppers and tenant farmers.
In some states in 1937, as much as 4/5ths of the cultivated land was in the lands of landlords and mortgage holders.

Some politicians, like Huey P. Long, courted the farmers' support with promises of relief. Long's "Sare-the-Wealth program promised to make "Every Man a King: with a guaranteed minimum income of \$5,000 per family

Use an earthy, boisterous, coarse appeal to the rural rednecks.

By the summer of 1935, Long's Share Our Wealth clubs had 7.5 million members nationwide, he regularly garnered 25 million radio listeners, and he was receiving 60,000 letters a week from supporters (more than the president). In the spring of 1935, Long undertook a national speaking tour and regular radio appearances, attracting large crowds and increasing his stature. In anticipation of running for president.

September 8, 1935 Stopped by an assassin's bullet

A month after announcing that he would run for president, Long was assassinated by a political opponent. His last words were, "God, don't let me die. I have so much to do

FDR made the condition of the independent farmer, and provided aid on a unprecedented scale with the subsidy of crop prices, programs of credit, crop insurance, market controls, soil conservation, tariffs, and import quotas.

To the Congress:

I transmit herewith for the information of the Congress the report of the Special Committee on Farm Tenancy.

The facts presented in this report reveal a grave problem of great magnitude and complexity. The American dream of the family-size farm, owned by the family which operates it, has become more and more remote. The agricultural ladder, on which an energetic young man might ascend from hired man to tenant to independent owner, is no longer serving its purpose.

Half a century ago one of every four farmers was a tenant. Today, two of every five are tenants, and on some of our best farm lands seven of every ten farmers are tenants. All told, they operate land and buildings valued at eleven billion dollars.

For the past ten years, the number of new tenants every year has been about forty thousand. Many tenants change farms every two or three years, and apparently one out of three changes farms every year. The agricultural ladder, for these American citizens, has become a treadmill.

At the same time, owners of family-size farms have been slipping down. Thousands of farmers commonly considered owners are as insecure as tenants. The farm owner-operator's equity in his property is, on the average, 42 percent, and in some of our best farming sections is as little as one-fifth.

When fully half the total farm population of the United States no longer can feel secure, when millions of our people have lost their roots in the soil, action to provide security is imperative, and will be generally approved.

A problem of such magnitude is not solved overnight, nor by any one limited approach, nor by the Federal Government alone. While aggravated by the depression, the tenancy problem is the accumulated result of generations of unthinking exploitation of our agricultural resources, both land and people. We can no longer postpone action. We must begin at once with such resources of man-power, money, and experience as are available, and with such methods as will call forth the cooperative effort of local, state, and federal agencies of government, and of landlords quite as much as tenants. In dealing with the problem of relief among rural people during the depression, we have already accumulated information and experience which will be of great value in the long-time program. It will be wise to start the permanent program on a scale commensurate with our resources and experience, with the purpose of later expanding the program to a scale commensurate with the magnitude of the problem as rapidly as our experience and resources will permit.

The Special Committee on Farm Tenancy emphasizes the necessity for action of at least four types: First, action to open the doors of ownership to tenants who now have the requisite ability and experience, but who can become owners only with the assistance of liberal credit, on long terms, and technical advice; second, modest loans, with the necessary guidance and education to prevent small owners from slipping into tenancy, and to help the masses of tenants, croppers and farm laborers at the very bottom of the agricultural ladder increase their standards of living, achieve greater security, and begin the upward climb toward land ownership; third, the retirement by public agencies of land proved to be unsuited for farming, and assistance to the families living thereon in finding homes on good land; fourth, cooperation with state and local agencies of government to improve the general leasing system. These activities which bear such close relation to each other should furnish a sound basis for the beginning of a program for improving the present intolerable condition of the lowest income farm families.

The Committee has very properly emphasized the importance of health and education in any long-time program for correcting the evils from which this large section of our population suffers. Attention is also called to the part which land population has played in bringing insecurity into the lives of rural families, and to the necessity for eliminating sharp fluctuations in land value due to speculative activity in farm lands.

The attack on the problem of farm tenancy and farm security is a logical continuation of the agricultural program this administration has been developing since March 4, 1933. Necessarily, whatever program the Congress devises will have to be closely integrated with existing activities for maintaining farm income and for conserving and improving our agricultural resources.

Obviously action by the states alone and independently cannot cure the widespread ill. A nationwide program under federal leadership and with the assistance of states, counties, communities and individuals is the only solution. Most Americans believe that our form of government does not prohibit action on behalf of those who need help.

From <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15362>

15.

Robert Frost

Poem from *A Further Range* (1936)

A Lone Striker

The swinging mill bell changed its rate
To tolling like the count of fate,
And though at that the tardy ran,
One failed to make the closing gate.
There was a law of God or man
That on the one who came too late
The gate for half an hour be locked,
His time be lost, his pittance docked.
He stood rebuked and unemployed.
The straining mill began to shake,
The mill, though many, many eyed,
Had eyes inscrutably opaque;
So that he couldn't look inside
To see if some forlorn machine
Was standing idle for his sake.
(He couldn't hope its heart would break.)

And yet he thought he saw the scene:
The air was full of dust of wool.
A thousand yarns were under pull,
But pull so slow, with such a twist,
All day from spool to lesser spool,
It seldom overtaxed their strength;
They safely grew in slender length.
And if one broke by any chance,
The spinner saw it at a glance.
The spinner still was there to spin.

That's where the human still came in.
Her deft hand showed with finger rings
Among the harp-like spread of strings.
She caught the pieces end to end
And, with a touch that never missed,

Not so much tied as made them blend.
Man's ingenuity was good.
He saw it plainly where he stood,
Yet found it easy to resist.

He knew another place, a wood,
And in it, tall as trees, were cliffs;
And if he stood on one of these,
'Twould be among the tops of trees,
Their upper branches round him wreathing,
Their breathing mingled with his breathing.
If—if he stood! Enough of ifs!
He knew a path that wanted walking;
He knew a spring that wanted drinking;
A thought that wanted further thinking;
A love that wanted re-renewing.
Nor was this just a way of talking
To save him the expense of doing.
With him it boded action, deed.

The factory was very fine;
He wished it all the modern speed.
Yet, after all, 'twas not divine,
That is to say, 'twas not a church.
He never would assume that he'd
Be any institution's need.
But he said then and still would say
If there should ever come a day
When industry seemed like to die
Because he left it in the lurch,
Or even merely seemed to pine
For want of his approval, why,
Come get him— they knew where to search.

From <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA05/dulis/poetry/Frost/frost2.html>

Another longer source:

Nathaniel Hawthorne lived at the Transcendental utopian experiment Brook Farm for a brief time in 1841.
The Blithedale Romance is a fictionalized account of this experience.